



COLLIER HERITAGE FOUNDATION

DISSEMINATING COLLIER FAMILY GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL INFORMATION

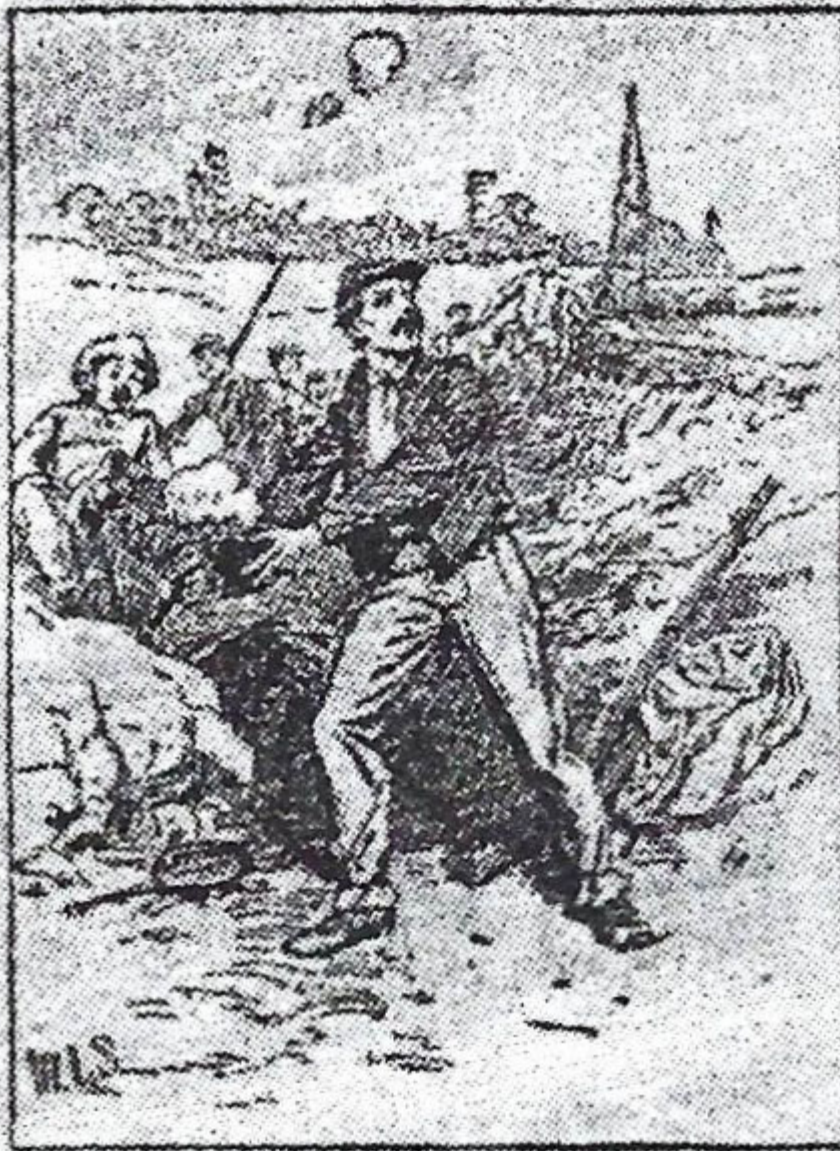
[HOME](#)[ABOUT](#)[CONTACT](#)[SUBMIT POST](#)[MESSAGE BOARD](#)

Isaac Peterson Collier, “Nothing But My Duty”

AUGUST 18, 2018 2:17 PM \ [1 COMMENT](#) \ [BY COLLIERHERITAGE](#) \ [EDIT](#)

Nothing But My Duty

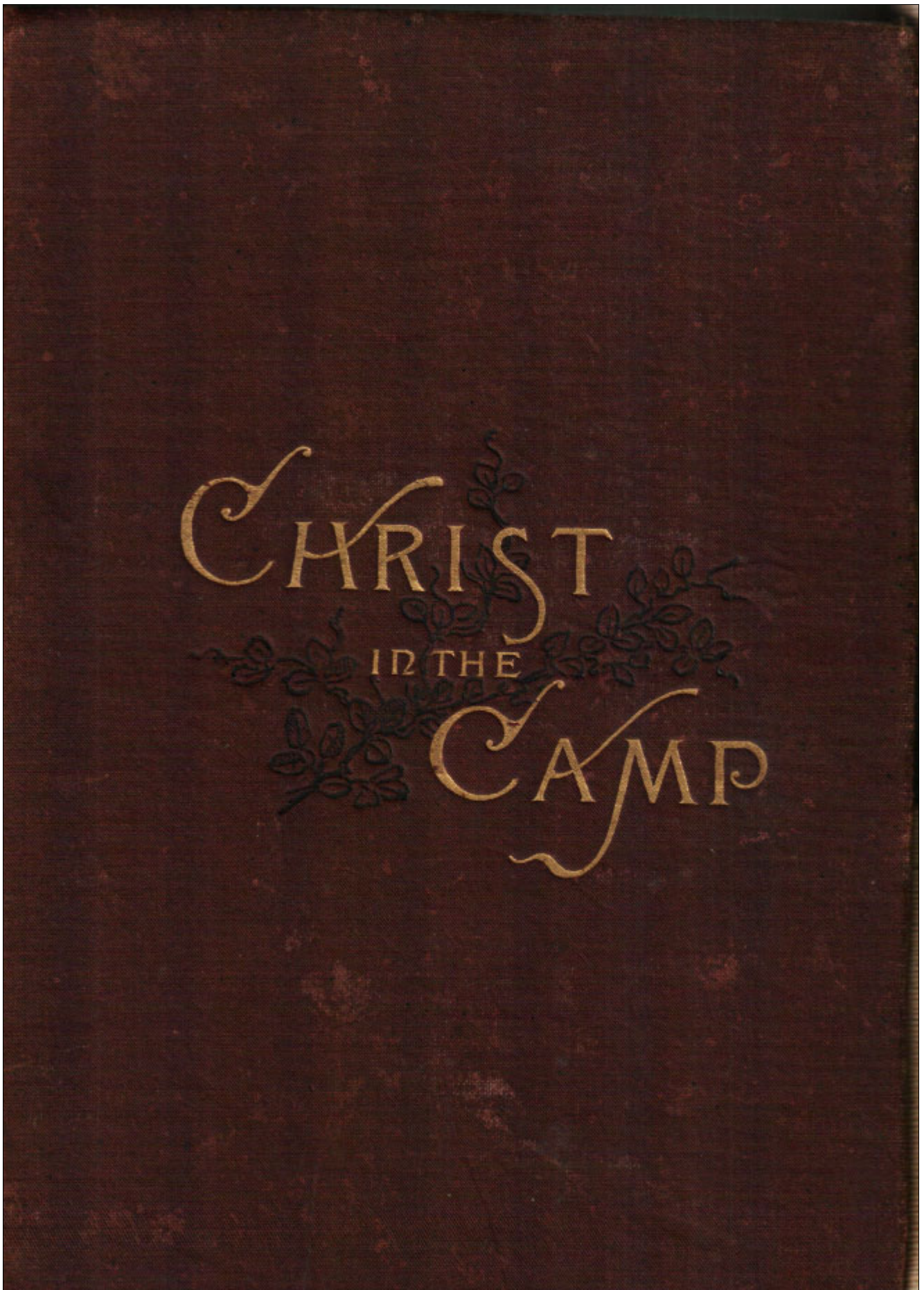
The Story of Sergeant Pete Collier, CSA



If you are following the informational rail that fronts the exhibits in the museum at the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, you will see a special display concerning the heroism of Sergeant Isaac Peterson Collier (see post *The Sons of Charles Vines Collier, Sr. and Rebecca Owen Collier,*

dated September 14, 2015). His courageous act during the Battle for Kennesaw Mountain was witnessed by his commander, General John King Jackson, who was on horseback nearby and who offered a battlefield commission to Collier. The offer of promotion was eloquently and selflessly declined by Collier. The event and Collier's response were reported in local newspapers at the time (in particular the Macon Telegraph) who were no doubt looking for good and encouraging news as Sherman's forces bore down on Atlanta. Years after the War, Collier's actions continued to be celebrated as reflecting the courage, honor, humbleness, and dedication of the Southern soldier.

The incident at the Battle for Kennesaw Mountain was immortalized in an engraving (see above) by renowned artist William L. Sheppard. In 1887, the story was included in Reverend John William Jones' *Christ in the Camp*.



And in 1895, the engraving appeared in *Story of the Confederate States*, by Joseph T. Derry.

STORY OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES;

OR,

History of the War for Southern Independence,

* EMBRACING

A BRIEF BUT COMPREHENSIVE SKETCH OF THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE
COUNTRY, TROUBLE WITH THE INDIANS, THE FRENCH, REVOLUTIONARY
AND MEXICAN WARS, AND A FULL, COMPLETE AND GRAPHIC
ACCOUNT OF THE GREAT FOUR YEARS' WAR BETWEEN THE
NORTH AND THE SOUTH, ITS CAUSES, EFFECTS, ETC.

BY

JOSEPH T. DERRY,

OF GEORGIA.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY GEN. CLEMENT A. EVANS,

OF GEORGIA.

SUITED TO ALL OF THOSE WHO WISH AN INTERESTING, INSTRUCTIVE AND
TRUE ACCOUNT OF THE WAR FOR SOUTHERN INDEPENDENCE,
BUT DESIGNED ESPECIALLY FOR THE BOYS AND
GIRLS OF THE SOUTH.

Beautifully Illustrated. Over 130 Fine Engravings.

RICHMOND, VA.:
B. F. JOHNSON PUBLISHING COMPANY.
1895.

And an eye witness recalled the event in a 1924 edition of the Confederate Veteran.

Confederate Veteran.

VOL. XXXII.

FEBRUARY, 1924

NO. 2

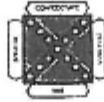


MATTHEW FONTAINE MAURY

From the portrait presented to the Naval Academy at Annapolis during the U. D. C. Convention in Washington, D. C. The portrait was the gift of the Atlanta Chapter U. D. C.

While conducting research for the Confederate Cemetery at Marietta, Georgia, historian Chris Davis came upon the story of Sergeant Isaac Peterson Collier. In 1996, Davis made application for Isaac Peterson Collier to receive the Sons of Confederate Veterans Medal of Honor. The Medal of Honor

Committee's vote was a 3-3 tie. The letter of denial, for some unknown reason, recommended re-applying at a later date.



Sons of Confederate Veterans Medal of Honor Committee

Gregg S. Clemmer, Chairman
14512 Brookmead Drive
Germantown, Maryland 20874
301-963-0141

Members

Robert L. Brown
South Carolina
Dr. James G. Caster
Oklahoma
Gregg S. Clemmer
Maryland
Phillip E. Gotschalk
Missouri
Earl F. Haney
Virginia
Perry J. Outlaw
Alabama

17 July 1996

Dear Compatriot Davis,

The Committee has reviewed your nomination of Sgt. Isaac Peter Collier, Co. K, 5th Regiment Georgia Volunteers, for the Confederate Medal of Honor.

Because of an unprecedented tie vote, (three in favor, three against, and one electing not to vote) Pvt. Collier was not approved for the Medal of Honor.

Due to these unusual circumstances, and in consideration of the Committee's obligation to render a definitive decision on all applications, I recommend you resubmit the nomination sometime after the National Convention in Richmond.

On behalf of the Confederate Medal of Honor Committee, I thank you for your diligent research and the opportunity to hear of Pvt. Collier's noble war service.

Sincerely,

Gregg Clemmer, Chairman

cc: CMOH Committeemen

PS Feel free to add to your nomination any additional materials G.S.C.

"There never were such men in an Army before. They will go anywhere and do anything..."
R.E. Lee

In 1999, SCV Historian Larry Blair, with strong support from the Kennesaw Battlefield SCV Camp, took

up the cause of Isaac Peterson Collier.

CONFEDERATE MEDAL OF HONOR EFFORT UPDATE

BY Larry O. Blair

As you now know Kennesaw Camp 700 has taken up the effort to nominate a most deserving Confederate veteran for our highest award. He is Sergeant Isaac Peter Collier of Company K, 5th. Regiment Georgia Volunteer Infantry. Sgt. Collier was from Upson, County.

Since our last meeting I have accomplished several things in this effort and want to update the Camp. My brother and I were gone for eleven days during the first half of May on a whirlwind trip to such places as Richmond, Five Forks, Malvern Hill, Chancellorsville, Ellwood Plantation, (burial site of Stonewall Jackson's arm), Manassas, Fredericksburg, Lee Chapel and VMI, Luray Caverns, Guinea Station, etc, and etc. I have been busy!

ITEMS ACCOMPLISHED

- * Contacted our fellow SCV'er of the Stone Mountain Camp and told him we would indeed take-up the effort to nominate Sgt. Collier. Chris Davis was my contact and the one who brought the valliant deeds of Sgt. Collier to my attention.
- * Chris was very pleased and volunteered to furnish me with all the necessary clean duplicate copies of all necessary information that had to be submitted with the application form.
- * I made handout copies of SCV information concerning the Confederate Medal Of Honor, also copies of information concerning a Maryland recipient. These will be handed out at an upcoming meeting.
- * Received a timely excerpt from Above And Beyond, A history of the Medal of Honor from the Civil War to Vietnam, from Camp Adj. Lee Alexander. This proved most helpful later.
- * Called Gregg Clemmer, of the Medal of Honor Committee. He lives in Germantown, Maryland. I asked for an application form and we discussed at length the Confederate Medal of Honor and things military in general. If awarded to Sgt. Collier the Camp's fee will be 49% or \$100. The SCV covers the other 51% of the cost.
- * Contacted the National Headquarters.
- * Received large package of copies mentioned above from Chris Davis and also received SCV application form mentioned above as well.
- * Studied information and began thought processes.

By the time of our July meeting SCV application form will have been completed with a cover letter produced and all copied and most likely the entire package will have been mailed in for consideration.

The application was filed June 12, 1999.



June 12, 1999

Sons of Confederate Veterans
Medal of Honor Committee
C/O Gregg S. Clemmer, Chairman
14513 Brookmead Drive
Germantown, Maryland 20874

Dear Compatriot Clemmer:

Greetings to the SCV Medal Of Honor Committee from the Kennesaw Battlefield Camp, Camp No. 700 of Marietta, Georgia. It is my honor to submit the enclosed application for consideration of the Committee for consideration of a Medal of Honor award to Sergeant Isaac Peter Collier of the 5th Regiment Georgia Volunteer Infantry.

Sgt. Collier was actually submitted for consideration once before back in 1996. However, as your letter of 17 July 1996 stated it was "recommended you resubmit the nomination sometime"...later. This original nomination was made by a member of the Stone Mountain Camp, a Mr. Chris Davis. Davis and I had worked on a project before concerning the Confederate Cemetery here in Marietta when we first discussed Sgt. Collier and Davis' effort to have this most deserving Confederate soldier awarded the highest honor the Sons of Confederate Veterans can bestow.

At that time a tie vote and one member abstaining produced this unusual circumstance. Since Sgt. Collier's actions described herein did in fact occur here in Marietta at what is now lands of the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, we felt it appropriate that the members of the Kennesaw Battlefield Camp resubmit the application.

None of us have any connection with Sgt. Collier in any way. We do, however, feel that his unselfish act of heroism deserves the highest recognition we as an organization can bestow.

Sgt. Collier surely saved the lives of several of his unit as well as that of his own. He had no way of knowing if the fuse would be extinguished if he hurled the live shell over the crest of their trench. A parallel can be drawn today in modern warfare. For example during the Pacific Theater of World War II, "Twenty-six marines in the Pacific received the Medal of Honor for jumping on grenades to protect their comrades." Two of these men survived. (Above and Beyond A History of the Medal of Honor from the Civil War to Vietnam, page 235). I understand we as an organization wish our presentation to represent the highest deeds of bravery possible. I feel that in another time and place these twenty-six Marines would be proud to have Sgt. Collier receive such an honor. In combat men do not have time to weigh the pros and cons of such action...it just happens, it comes from down deep within the individual, some men may have such a trait while others do not.

As a Camp we understand our cost and obligation to find a fitting place for permanent display should Sgt. Collier be awarded this high honor. Plans are already underway for such. It is our hope that the Medal of Honor Committee will vote in favor of our application.

Best Regards,
Larry O. Blair
Larry O. Blair,
1st. Lt. Commander and Camp Historian

192 Sequoia Dr., N.E. Marietta, Georgia 30060-7214 770/422-2174

In November 1999, the SCV Medal of Honor Committee, with a unanimous vote, denied the application.



Sons of Confederate Veterans Medal of Honor Committee

Gregg S. Clemmer, Chairman
14513 Brookmead Drive
Germantown, Maryland 20874
301-963-0141

Members

De-Rick Blankenship
Oklahoma

Robert L. Brown
South Carolina

William Bushnell, Jr.
Georgia

Gregg S. Clemmer
Maryland

Philip E. Gottschalk
Missouri

Earl F. Hervey
Virginia

Barry J. Outlaw
Alabama

11 November 1999

Dear Compatriot Dale:

I am in receipt of your letter of 5 November 1999, re the denied Medal of Honor Application for Sergeant Isaac Peter Collier.

In its deliberations, the Committee noted that Sgt. Collier's act did not meet the extreme situation of falling on a hand grenade...but instead mirrored that of the soldier who frantically picks up the grenade and hurls it away. Such actions occurred hundreds of times in the Pacific and European theatres during WW2 and no Medals of Honor were ever presented for such deeds as this.

The decision of the Committee, a final, unanimous 0-5 vote, in no way detracts from the notable deed Sgt. Collier performed that day. He and thousands of other brave soldiers who wore the Gray still deserve our respect and admiration for the cause in which they fought and believed.

Yours in tribute to Southern valor,

Gregg Clemmer

"There never were such men in an Army before. They will go anywhere and do anything..."
R.E. Lee

fall 1



Jim Dale, 2nd Lieutenant Commander/Editor
Kennesaw Battlefield Camp 700, SCV (Marietta, GA)
3983 Cripple Creek Drive
Kennesaw, GA 30144
15 Nov 99

Dear Commander Eason, 1st Lieutenant Commander Blair, and Adjutant Alexander,

I received a reply from the Confederate Medal of Honor Committee today. Please see the response from Mr. Clemmer at enclosure one. Their decision does not surprise me. I call your attention to enclosure two, the December issue of *The Kennesaw Cadence*, page two, "Items of Interest," which contains two references regarding the award of the U.S. Medal of Honor. Both references are taken from *The Civil War Times* newspaper. You will note these acts by Union veterans are not out of line with the act of Sergeant Collier. I do not believe any standard should exist to exceed that of the U.S. Medal of Honor, and this includes one for Southern soldiers.

I agree with you, Lt. Cdr. Blair; this episode will also have a profound effect on my perception of the SCV, from a standpoint of it's politics. This letter, like the first one, says very little to explain the Committee's actions, and the lack of an appeal is without precedence for an adjudicative body in this country. I take exception to the statement in the Committee's letter, regarding WWII soldiers in comparison to Sergeant Collier's actions; there is no basis for correlation in that statement. There is good reason to believe Sergeant Collier's superiors thought his actions beyond self preservation, or they would not have offered him a battlefield commission for his deed. It appears the committee does not have the desire nor the commitment to perform a meaningful investigation of the matter.

Sincerely,


Jim

Encls:

1. Medal of Honor Letter
2. Page two, *The Kennesaw Cadence*

CC: Greg Clemmer

*Larry, I am sending you
the original letter for
the Camp Historical records.
Jim*

Obviously disappointed in the denial for the SCV medal, Blair continued to pursue the honor he felt Collier deserved by working for a spot in the new museum at Kennesaw Battlefield National Park.



Brothers Larry Blair, left, of Marietta and Ronald Blair of Smyrna use a map to locate an old Civil War trench at Kennesaw Mountain on Thursday afternoon. The two are looking for the trench in which a Confederate

soldier caught a Union shell and saved his comrades. That soldier, Sgt. Isaac Peter Collier, was nominated for a Confederate Medal of Honor by a local chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, but was denied.

Staff photo by Damien A. Guarnieri

Fight for honor

By Karen Hillenbrand
Neighbor Staff Writer

MARIETTA—Local historian Larry Blair says a man who performed a little-known act of heroism during the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain deserves a Confederate Medal of Honor.

However, the national chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, which awards the medals, does not agree.

The Kennesaw Battlefield Camp of SCV, based in Marietta, nominated Sgt. Isaac Peter Collier for the honor this summer but recently learned the nomination had been declined.

"They did not tell us why," said Blair, the first lieutenant commander for the Kennesaw Battlefield SCV camp. "They don't have to tell us why. We were very disappointed."

Through extensive research, Blair, along with Stone Mountain SCV member Chris Davis, uncovered the little-known story of Collier, who served in the 5th Regiment Georgia Volunteer Infantry of the Confederate Army.

Collier, an Upson County resident who died around 1887, saved the lives of about seven of his company mates and himself by picking up a 12-pound explosive shell that had flown into his trench. He threw it into a pile of water, where it extinguished itself.

The incident took place June 21, 1864, near the present-day intersection of Burnt Hickory and Old Mountain roads.

During heavy fire, the explosive fell among the men in the trench, and Collier picked up the explosive, with its fuse still burning, while others ran for cover.



A wood engraving by artist William L. Sheppard immortalized Collier's heroic act.

"In any field of battle these days, anyone who did that would get a medal," Blair said.

However, the Confederate Army never awarded medals during the Civil War, Blair said.

"They needed all their metal for other purposes," he said.

Since the war, the Sons of Confederate Veterans has awarded only 46 medals of honor.

"They seem to be quite pleased with the low number," Blair said.

But just because Collier didn't die while performing his heroic act does not mean he doesn't deserve a medal, according to Blair.

Blair, retired from BellSouth, said he decided to champion Collier's

cause partly because he fought at Kennesaw Mountain but also because he was inspired by his brave act.

Blair has uncovered extensive documentation that says Collier's general, John King Jackson, offered him a battlefield promotion after witnessing the act, but Collier declined.

"He refused to accept it because he didn't want to leave his company mates," Blair said.

Several of Collier's comrades as well as General Jackson wrote about the incident.

Artist William L. Sheppard even immortalized the event through a wood engraving.

According to the SCV, recipients of the Confederate Medal of Honor "must have distinguished himself/herself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in action against the enemy of the Confederate States of America."

The act of bravery must be proven incontestably and must distinguish the individual above his comrades, according to the SCV.

Several years ago, Davis, of the Stone Mountain SCV, also nominated Collier for the medal. At that time, the national SCV cast a tie vote on the nomination and recommended that it be re-filed at a later date.

Blair took up the cause this year.

Since Collier won't be recognized with the medal, Blair said he just wants to get Collier some local recognition and possibly a display at the new Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park visitors center.

Local men
wage battle
to get Civil
War hero
awarded
Confederate
Medal of
Honor

The Smyrna Neighbor
Serving Cobb's Fastest Growing City

Vol. 30, No. 51 Telephone (770) 428-9411 / Fax (770) 422-8533 Smyrna, Georgia ~ Thursday, December 23, 1998 Classifieds (770) 427-9431 50 Cents Per Copy

Thank you, Mr. Blair for your efforts!

June 27,

Fighting in Front

d retreats, having suffered at least 1,500
ion losses number about 250. Although
x fails, it frustrates Sherman's flanking
d blocks any further advances south of
ountain.



ho planned it, and showed an
l the difficulties to be
ere could be no excuse."

An Act of Valor

On June 21, as Sherman's artillery
pounds Confederate positions south of
the Burnt Hickory Road, a 12-pounder
shell ploughs into the earthworks held
by the 5th Georgia Infantry. With its fuse
still burning and hissing, it passes
underneath the headlog and falls at the
feet of Sergeant Isaac P. Collier.



As the men on either side of him
dive for cover, Collier grabs the
sputtering shell and heaves it out
of the trench. It lands in a nearby
puddle that puts out the fuse,
preventing a frightful blast.

Taking note of the incident,
Sergeant Collier's brigade
commander orders him promoted
to second lieutenant, but Collier
respectfully declines the honor.
"In throwing the shell from the
ditch," he writes, "I am conscious
of having done nothing but my
duty in attempting to save my
life and the lives of the men
around me."



Kennesaw Mountain, June 27, 1864 - 8:00



POSTED IN: [GENEALOGY](#), [MILITARY](#)

One Thought on “Isaac Peterson Collier, “Nothing But My Duty””



[Andykaufmantony](#)

on [August 22, 2018 at 10:35 am](#) said:

[Edit](#)

Thank you for the great and informative article![andy kaufman tony](#)

[Reply](#)↓

[← Previous Post](#)

[Next Post →](#)